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SUBJECT: S/E LEFKOWITZ MEETING WITH SOUTH KOREAN PERM REP

Classified By: Political Counselor William Brencick, for reasons 1.4 b, d.

¶1. (C) Summary: Special Envoy Jay Lefkowitz met with South Korean Perm Rep Choi Young-jin to discuss North Korean human rights resolutions this fall at the UN General Assembly Third Committee and the UN Human Rights Council. They also discussed refugees, the Kaesong Industrial Complex and a possible visit to the region. End Summary.

¶2. (U) Special Envoy for Human Rights in North Korea Jay Lefkowitz met with South Korean Perm Rep Choi Young-jin at the ROK Mission to the UN on August 11. Also joining were G/SENK Senior Advisor Christian Whiton and USUN note taker Bridget Lines on the U.S. side, and Second Secretary Johnny ¶I. B. Kim on the South Korean side.

¶3. (U) Perm Rep Choi began by noting that he had come from North Korea, escaping with his mother and two sisters when they fell out of a forced march during the Korean War. He noted that he undoubtedly had relatives in North Korea, even though he has never met them.

¶4. (U) Special Envoy Lefkowitz said he wanted to raise three issues with the Korean government. First, he wanted to express gratitude for their help in arranging a visit to Kaesong (postponed). Second, he wanted to thank them for their help with admitting refugees to the U.S. He noted that President Bush feels strongly about this issue. Third, he noted that we are expecting resolutions related to North Korean human rights violation at the UN General Assembly Third Committee (October) and the UN Human Rights Council (December).

¶5. (U) Special Envoy Lefkowitz noted ROK Foreign Minister Ban made encouraging remarks about the North Korean human rights situation while Ban was in Geneva last June. Special Envoy Lefkowitz noted this was a significant issue, and we hope it suggests the ROK will look anew at this. He said it would be helpful if the ROK could join in some type of resolution and he wanted to start a dialogue with the ROK on this matter, noting that an abstention by the ROK would be &unfortunate.8

¶6. (C) Perm Rep Choi said that South Korea is eager to cooperate on refugees. He said he would convey the Special Envoy's messages to his government. On the issue of supporting a resolution, he said that there was heated debate

about this four years ago, and that any new decision would have to be made at the highest levels of government.

¶7. (C) Special Envoy Lefkowitz said this was an opportunity for the ROK to be helpful, but that he understood it would come at a cost. He said he will need to speak to the issue in public, but that we were always ready to work with the ROK.

¶8. (C) On Kaesong, Perm Rep Choi said it would be ideal if North Korean workers were paid directly, but they have been unable to get agreement on this issue from the DPRK. He also said that, following his February visit to Kaesong, he was frustrated by the work environment and compared it to labor camp, with no outside life for workers. Special Envoy Lefkowitz said it would be desirable to make incremental progress on the various issues related to Kaesong, and said he hoped to reschedule his planned visit to Kaesong in the near future.

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